This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T ROME 001636

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2014
TAGS: MARR MOPS PREL AL IT IRAQI FREEDOM
SUBJECT: ITALY NOT PRESSING FOR ALBANIAN TROOPS TO JOIN
ITALIAN IRAQ CONTINGENT

REF: A) TIRANA 532 (NOTAL) B) STATE 51767

CLASSIFIED BY: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN FOR REASONS
1.5(B)(D)

    ¶1. (C) CONTACTS AT THE MFA, MOD AND PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE
CONFIRMED THAT PRIME MINISTER BERLUSCONI AND PRIME MINISTER
NANO DISCUSSED THE POSSIBILITY OF ALBANIAN TROOPS JOINING
WITH ITALIAN FORCES IN SOME THEATRE TO GIVE THE ALBANIANS
MORE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES. NONE OF OUR CONTACTS REFERRED
TO THIS AS A "REQUEST" MADE BY BERLUSCONI. THE CONCEPT
EVOLVED FROM GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOW TO BOLSTER
ALBANIA'S CANDIDACY FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP. IN MEETINGS WITH
CONTACTS, INCLUDING THE ALBANIAN EMBASSY DCM, FOR A READ-OUT
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PM NANO'S VISIT, NO ONE EVEN MENTIONED
THAT THIS HAD BEEN RAISED. WHEN BROACHED IN RESPONSE TO
REFTEL A, NONE OF OUR CONTACTS REQUESTED USG SUPPORT FOR SUCH
A PROPOSAL.

¶2. (C) COMMENT. THERE IS NO INDICATION FROM OUR MEETINGS
WITH ITALIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR FROM PRESS REPORTING
THAT BERLUSCONI IS LOOKING TO THE ALBANIANS FOR POLITICAL
COVER FOR ITALIAN PARTICIPATION IN IRAQ. WE SUSPECT THIS IS
THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR IN TIRANA'S SPIN. THE ITALIANS HAVE
TRADITIONALLY PLAYED A "BIG BROTHER" ROLE TO ALBANIA AND HAVE
BEEN WORKING WITH THE ALBANIANS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR NATO
CANDIDACY. THIS WOULD SEEM TO BE A MORE LIKELY EXPLANATION
FOR ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR A JOINT CONTINGENT. SINCE
INTEGRATING ALBANIANS INTO AN ITALIAN FORCE IN THE BALKANS IS
NOT ADVISABLE, IRAQ WOULD BE AN ALTERNATIVE OPTION. WE LEAVE
TO OTHERS TO DETERMINE WHETHER IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO
ASSOCIATE AN ALBANIAN CONTINGENT WITH THE ITALIANS IN THE
BRITISH SECTOR IN IRAQ. END COMMENT.

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